

# What is the Trail of Tears?

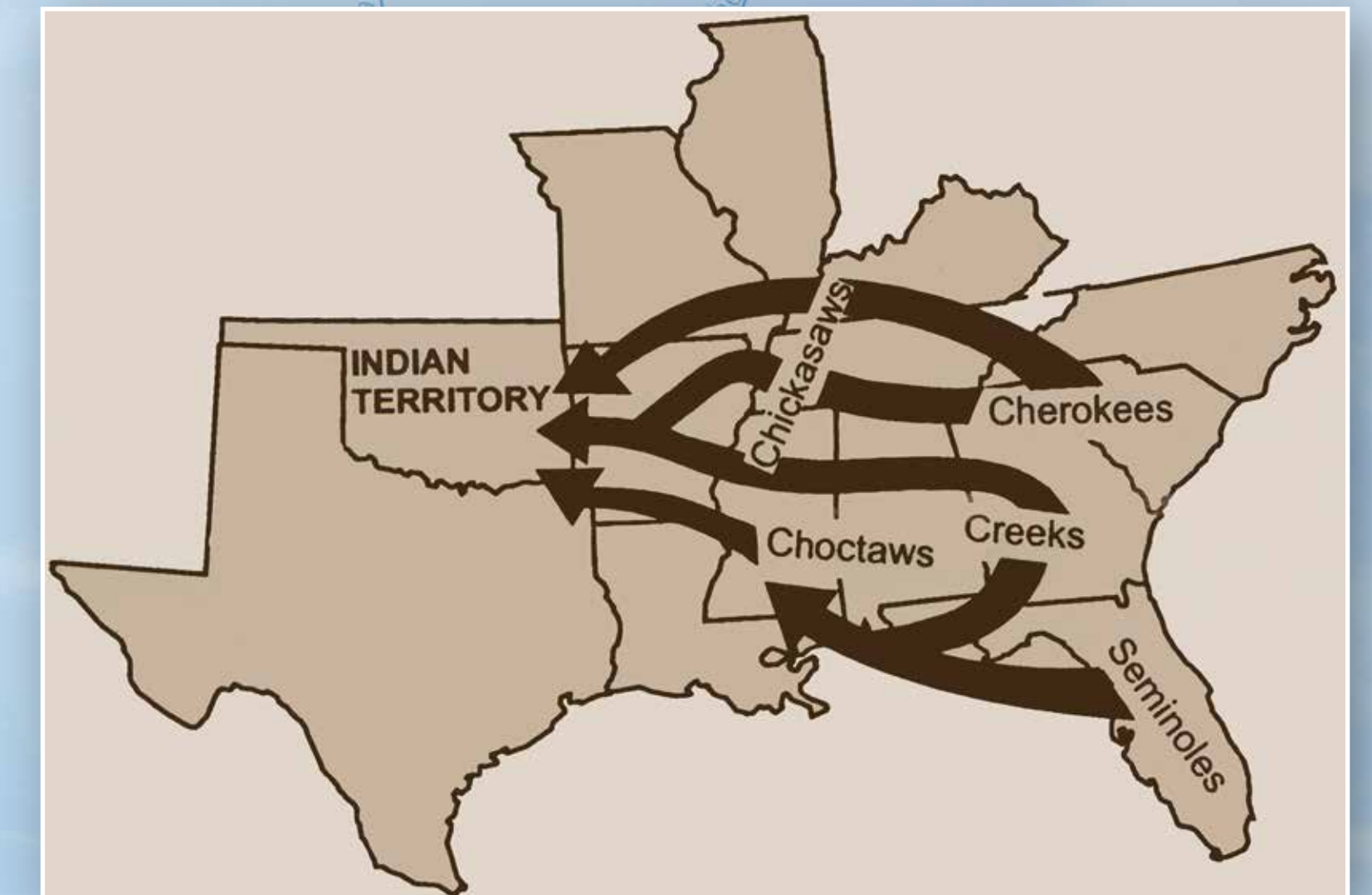
From 1837 to 1839, thousands of Cherokee traveled along local roads and through what is now Laughlin Park on their way to Indian Territory in the West. Some groups encamped here on their journey.

The Cherokee, or the “Principal People” or *Ani’-Yun’ wiya*, did not willingly leave their homeland in the southern Appalachian Mountains. The 1830 Indian Removal Act required that they surrender their land. In the decade that followed, the federal government forcibly removed Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole from their homes in the Southeast and relocated them to Indian Territory in present-day Oklahoma.

This tragic journey is called the Trail of Tears.



Waynesville and Roubidoux Creek lie along the northern route of the Trail of Tears. The northern route was used by 11 of the 17 Cherokee detachments. Other Indian nations followed different routes along their forced migration.



In the 1830s, the federal government forcibly removed approximately 16,000 Cherokee; 21,000 Muscogee (Creek); 9,000 Choctaw; 6,000 Chickasaw; and 4,000 Seminole from their ancestral homes in the southeastern United States.